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The Secret Is Out

CIA Observes 20th Birthday

Special to The Virginian-Pilot

WASHINGTON — The super-secret Central Intelligence Agency held a private 20th birthday party Monday, but the word seeped through from its massive secluded headquarters across the Potomac at Langley, Va.

President Johnson sent a letter praising the CIA as "the best in the world" in the highly competi-

tive field of international intelligence.

Vice President Hubert M. Humphrey appeared in person at the ceremonies in the 499-seat CIA auditorium at which CIA Director Richard Helms gave awards to employees who have served the agency for more than 10 years.

Eight hundred-three persons

who have been with the agency since its beginnings in 1947 were honored at the ceremony. No one would say how many employees are on CIA's payroll now.

Johnson's letter recalled that the nation had "no broad-scale professional intelligence service worthy of the name" before the CIA was formed.

"Since that time," the letter continued, "you have become a dedicated and disciplined core of professionals, with clearly-defined responsibilities. . . .

"You give us information on which decisions affecting the course of history are made. Your product must be as perfect as is humanly possible—though the material you must work with is far from perfect. . . .

"You have built on a solid foundation in these past 20 years. America relies on your constant dedication to the truth—on your commitment to the democratic ideal. I believe our trust is well placed."

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